



Get the Facts!
 about
Asbestos



Spring, 2001

Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools

Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) in 1986 to protect school children and school employees from exposure to asbestos in school buildings. If asbestos fibers are inhaled, they can lead to health problems such as cancer and asbestosis; it may be 20 years or more before symptoms appear. Failure to comply with AHERA regulations can result in penalties of up to \$5,500 per day, per school.

Asbestos is used extensively in building materials because of its insulating, sound absorbing, and fire retarding capabilities. Intact and undisturbed asbestos materials generally do not pose a health risk. The mere presence of asbestos in a school does not mean that the health of its occupants is endangered. However, when asbestos-containing materials release fibers due to damage or deterioration over time, they become hazardous.

- Disseminate annual notifications of asbestos-related activities
- Ensure that only AHERA-accredited personnel perform inspections, develop management plans, and conduct response actions
- Ensure that an AHERA-accredited professional conducts a *reinspection* every three years

What Buildings Are Covered Under AHERA?

Any elementary or secondary school building owned or leased by a local education agency (public school district, charter school, or private, non-profit school) must follow requirements under AHERA.

How Does One Become Accredited Under AHERA?

AHERA accreditation courses are offered by course providers who have been approved either by the EPA or the appropriate state agency. A list of these approved course providers is available on the web site listed below or by calling the number listed below.

What Is Required Under AHERA?

- Maintain updated management plans that address asbestos hazards and potential hazards
- Maintain management plans and subsequent response actions on record
- Make management plans available to the public upon request

What Can You Do To Help?

As a superintendent or maintenance director, the most important thing you can do is to learn about your school's asbestos management plan. By becoming familiar with this plan, you will know if asbestos materials are in your school, what plans exist for managing the asbestos, and when these activities are scheduled to occur.

More Questions?

Additional information is available at:
www.epa.gov/r10earth/asbestos.htm

Or contact **Al Wasse** at **206-553-1417**
 or the **Asbestos Ombudsman Hotline** at **1-800-368-5888**.